

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, THE PACIFIC, AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT**  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

**Donald A. Manzullo (IL-16), Ranking Member**  
**Opening Statement**

June 4, 2009

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this hearing on the use of Agent Orange, which remains one of the unresolved legacies of the Vietnam War. The hearing you chaired in the last Congress on this same topic proved very insightful. Agent Orange, which was used from 1961-1971, left a lasting scar on all those who came in contact with it. Finding closure for this tragedy is in the interest of both the United States and Vietnam.

I am hopeful that the U.S. and Vietnam will continue to work together on addressing the legacy of Agent Orange. I note that according to the Congressional Research Service, the first \$3 million appropriated for environmental remediation and health care assistance has been programmed. Of this first \$3 million, approximately \$500,000 was used to hire a fulltime American advisor to be posted at the U.S. Embassy. This position was filled in December 2008. I am interested to know why this personnel funding is coming out of the appropriated funds and not out of the standard Department personnel accounts.

Mr. Chairman, I have long been in favor of improving America's relationship with Vietnam. I was part of the core group of Members that took a strong interest in re-opening diplomatic and economic relations with Vietnam to help begin to heal the legacies of the war. Since we restored relations with the country, Vietnam has received a significant amount of U.S. foreign assistance. Vietnam is one of the largest recipients of U.S. assistance in East Asia.

I have always been a staunch supporter of America's brave veterans. In 2001, I authored legislation that was eventually signed into law that required the Department of Veterans Affairs to no longer ignore veterans suffering from Gulf War illness. My bill was built on the model legislation developed years earlier to provide needed assistance from the VA to Vietnam veterans suffering from Agent Orange.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing from our distinguished witnesses. Thank you for calling this hearing.